

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 06596 251426Z

47 41

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01 AID-20 DPW-01 DRC-01

/141 W

----- 056336

R 251048Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5967

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 6596

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

BEGIN SUMMARY: SINCE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED LAST FEBRUARY, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS FITFULLY CAST ABOUT FOR SOME ROLE IN CONSIDERING THE AGREEMENT. PRIME MINISTER HAD ALSO BEEN SEEKING A WAY TO SATISFY KING'S DESIRE THAT CONSTITUTIONAL FORMS BE OBSERVED IN FORMATION OF NEW PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (PGNU). WE HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT SOUVANNA HAD DECIDED TO PRESENT AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTING PROTOCOL TO ASSEMBLY FOR APPROVAL AND TO ASK ASSEMBLY TO GRANT HIM FULL POWERS TO "RESHUFFLE" THE CABINET. THIS PLAN HAS, HOWEVER, IN PAST WEEK, BEEN REBUFFED BY A NUMBER OF DEPUTIES. END SUMMARY

1. FOUR DAYS AFTER THE PROTOCOL WAS SIGNED, SOUVANNA MET WITH ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT PHOU SANANIKONE TO EXPLORE WAYS OF OBTAINING THE ASSEMBLY'S ACQUIESCENCE TO THE AGREEMENT AND TO THE FORMATION OF THE NEW PGNU. THE DISCUSSIONS WERE APPARENTLY NOT PRODUCTIVE, FOR THE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE-- MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 19 - REPORTEDLY DECIDED  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENTI 06596 251426Z

AGAINST GIVING SPECIAL POWERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR

RESHUFFLING THE PGNU.

2. THEREAFTER, PRIME MINISTER INVITED A NUMBER OF DEPUTIES TO MEET WITH INDIVIDUALLY, IN ORDER TO EXCHANGE IDEAS ON THIS QUESTION; THROUGH SEPTEMBER 24, HE HAD MET WITH 15 OF THE 60 DEPUTIES. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS REPORTS, DEPUTIES, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER, HAVE GENERALLY OPPOSED GRANTING SPECIAL POWERS TO PRIME MINISTER ON GROUNDS THAT SUCH A PROCEDURE IS NOT PROVIDED FOR IN THE CONSTITUTION. MOST DEPUTIES EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE NAMES PROPOSED BY THE VIENTIANE SIDE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CABINET SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR APPROVAL, "CONCEDING" THAT PATHET LAO MINISTERS-DESIGNATE ARE NOT OF DIRECT CONCERN TO THE ASSEMBLY. WITH RESPECT TO APPROVING THE AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL, ONLY DEPUTY SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSING QUESTION (SERC VORAVONGSA) STATED THAT THESE DOCUMENTS NEED NOT BE RATIFIED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BECAUSE THEY MERELY CONSTITUTE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND A SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY.

3. OTHER DEPUTIES WHO HAVE DISCUSSED ASSEMBLY ATTITUDES WITH US IN RECENT DAYS HAVE GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE FOREGOING VIEWS OF THEIR COLLEAGUES. THEY NOTE SPECIFICALLY THAT NOWHERE IN THE CONSTITUTION IS THERE A PROVISION FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO GRANT SPECIAL POWERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. UNDER ARTICLE 19, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE KING'S COUNCIL, MEETING IN A NATIONAL CONGRESS, CAN GIVE SPECIAL POWERS TO THE KING, WHO CAN THEN APPOINT NEW MEMBERS OF A CABINET. (WE RECALL THAT IN 1962 PRIME MINISTER FORMED NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT PURSUANT TO SPECIAL MANDATE FROM KING. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SUBSEQUENTLY VOTED FULL POWERS TO COALITION GOVERNMENT; BUT LPF SEVERELY CRITICIZED SOUVANNA FOR IMPLICITLY RECOGNIZING ASSEMBLY ON THAT OCCASION BY HIS ATTENDANCE AT ASSEMBLY SESSION.)

4. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF UNDERLYING FACTORS AT PLAY ON THIS ISSUE. SOME DEPUTIES MAY INDEED BE MOTIVATED BY GENUINE DESIRE TO FIND A "CONSTITUTIONAL" SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM COMPLICATED BY LPF NON-RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 06596 251426Z

ASSEMBLY. OTHERS, LOOKING AHEAD TO ELECTIONS, HOPE TO SECURE REPRESENTATION ON NEW BODIES TO BE FORMED BY RLG-LPF AGREEMENT, SO THAT THEIR PERSONAL POLITICAL FUTURES ARE KEPT ALIVE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ASSEMBLY VICE-PRESIDENT SOPSAISANA, WHOSE CAREER WAS TARNISHED BY 1971 ALLEGED HEROIN-SMUGGLING SCANDAL IN FRANCE, IS DETERMINED TO BARTER HIS SUPPORT FOR SOUVANNA IN ASSEMBLY IN EXCHANGE FOR A SECRETARSHIP IN THE NEW PGNU.

5. FINALLY, THERE ARE SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT RIGHTIST ELEMENTS HAVE BEGUN A GENERAL "PSYWAR" CAMPAIGN AGAINST IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL, INCLUDING SCARE STORIES ABOUT THREATENED NVA "MAJOR OFFENSIVES" AND RALLIER ACCOUNTS THAT THE DRV IS PREPARING TO "ANNEX LAOS AND MAKE IT INTO THE 14TH PROVINCE OF NORTH VIETNAM." SUCH A CAMPAIGN WOULD BE GIVEN RESONANCE BY A MOVE TO OBSTRUCT THE PRIME MINISTER'S PLANS FOR SECURING ASSEMBLY APPROVAL IF THAT BODY'S DOMINANT FACTION, THE SANANIKONES' LAO HOM LAO PARTY, CHOSE TO ORGANIZE ONE.

6. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT SOUVANNA WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP THE ASSEMBLY UNDER CONTROL AFTER SOME OF THE MORE VOLUBLE DEPUTIES LET OFF SOME STEAM AND SOME OF THE MORE VENAL DEPUTIES RECEIVE SOME PATRONAGE. SO FAR, THE FERMENT ON THE RIGHT HAS NOT CRYSTALLIZED INTO THE SORT OF OVERT OPPOSITION WHICH WOULD WARRANT OUR TAKING A HAND. IT MAY WELL BE NECESSARY, AT ONE POINT, HOWEVER, TO EXERCISE SOME DISCREET PERSUASION AS WE DID IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISES OF 1972 TO ENSURE THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL MOVES ALONG AT A PACE BENEFICAL TO USG INTERESTS. WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 SEP 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** collinp0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973VIENTI06596  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS WHITEHOUSE  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** VIENTIANE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730911/aaaaahmf.tel  
**Line Count:** 138  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** collinp0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 DEC 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2002 by collinp0>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ROLE IN THE AGREEMENT  
**TAGS:** PGOV  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005